



Celebrating the Creative Spirit of our Community

TAKOMA PARK POET LAUREATE Call for Nominations

The Takoma Park Arts and Humanities Commission is soliciting nominees for the Takoma Park Poet Laureate. The selected poet would serve from July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2013.

The selected Poet Laureate must be a published poet and a Takoma Park resident. Nominations or self-nominations will be considered. All nominees must submit a cover letter, a curriculum vitae/resume including a list of publications, and three samples of poetry. The cover letter should identify a project the candidate would pursue over the two-year term to expand the community's awareness and interest in poetry.

The Poet Laureate is not a paid position; an honorarium of \$2,000 will be awarded per term.

Nomination submissions are due on or before 4:30 P.M. on Monday, May 9, 2011 and must be submitted to the Arts and Humanities Commission at the following address:

Takoma Park Arts and Humanities Commission
C/o Sara Anne Daines
7600 Maple Avenue
Takoma Park MD 20912

For additional information, please contact Sara Anne Daines, HCD Director, at 301.891.7224 or by email at SaraD@takomagov.org

Takoma Park Poet Laureate

“celebrating the creative spirit of our community”

The Takoma Park Poet Laureate program, established by Resolution of the City Council in May 2005, honors the achievements of a local poet and is designed to provide literary leadership in the community. Our goal is to not only support and promote Takoma Park’s poets but to stimulate interest in poetry among residents of the city, to encourage young and old to strive for greater expressive abilities, and to encourage wider appreciation of poetry and literature.

Background

Takoma Park has a tradition of supporting poetry as evidenced by the monthly “Third Thursday” poetry reading series and the “Writing a Village” workshops developed by past Poet Laureates Donald Berger (2005-2007) and Anne Becker (2007-2011) and the annual Favorite Poem Evening and Poetry Walk sponsored by the Friends of the Library. The city has been well known as a haven for creative individuals throughout the decades, and the Poet Laureate adds to the sense that it continues to be a special place, a distinctive, arts-friendly community. The Takoma Park Cultural Plan identifies a need for cultural education and programs that “foster an atmosphere/environment for children and adults to experience the arts and humanities . . .” As an individual who will develop and promote programs that celebrate the arts – in particular poetry - the Poet Laureate will support this vision of “a community of culturally aware residents.”

Goals

The goals of the Takoma Park Poet Laureate program are to honor achievement by a Takoma Park poet and, in doing so, to stimulate interest in poetry among residents of the city. A poet laureate is a symbol of the important role the arts play in our civic life and creative expression. When a city honors a poet, it creates: a model for youth, encouraging residents young and old to strive for greater expressive abilities; a literary ambassador to the community; and a means to encourage wider appreciation of poetry and literature. The presence of a poet laureate can be a source of pride for a community about the priorities it sets for its citizens, and a source of public pleasure. As Pier Giorgio di Cicco, Toronto Poet Laureate, said in a 2004 address, “A city is not happy owing just to prosperity or economic opportunity. It is happy in the hope and business of human and meaningful things.”

Term

The Poet Laureate shall be selected to serve a two-year term, with the possibility to be invited back to serve a second term.

Selection Criteria

The Poet Laureate shall be:

- A Takoma Park resident;
- A published poet who demonstrates achievement over an extended time period;
- An active practitioner;
- A person who is recognized by the literary community (either through awards, public notice, or letters attesting to his/her standing); and
- A person who has been engaged in teaching or public speaking, or who demonstrates other evidence of community engagement

Duties and Responsibilities

The Poet Laureate shall complete one public project of his/her own choosing that promotes poetry and writing; this will be worked out with the selection committee within three months of selection;

The Poet Laureate is encouraged to make other appearances at public service venues, such as schools or senior citizens homes. These activities support the goal of encouraging public education and lifelong learning in and through the arts and humanities.

Budget

The poet laureate shall receive a \$2,000 stipend for two years' service plus a certificate attesting to his/her service.

An additional \$500 will be budgeted to cover the costs of programs, such as readings, school workshops, mailings, or receptions

Selection Process

A standing committee of the Takoma Park Arts and Humanities Commission will send out a call for nominations to the community at large. Nominations or self-nominations must submit a cover letter, a curriculum vitae/resume including a list of publications, and three samples of poetry. Selected candidates will be interviewed by the selection committee.

The standing committee will create a three-member selection committee comprised of one member of the commission; the past Poet Laureate; and a published poet or interested Takoma Park resident. Members of the selection committee may also nominate prospective candidates.

The selection committee shall by a date established beforehand, make its choice, and forward it to the Takoma Park Arts and Humanities Commission for approval. The commission will then ask the City Council to vote on the appointment.

The Takoma Park Arts and Humanities Commission may elect to renew the poet laureate's appointment after two years or to choose a new poet laureate. The poet laureate's level of engagement with the community, continued residency, and continued achievement will be considered along with the other criteria.

Revised March 22, 2011